

By: Sonya McDaniel, Extension Educator, FCS/CED
OSU Extension Center

How much is clutter costing you?

We all have it ... that one or two items we just won't throw away because we will use it or need it someday. Or, do you find yourself purchasing new items and just adding them to the never-ending stack of decorations, craft supplies or tools? It's a misconception that saving items will somehow save you money, but the truth is clutter costs people a lot of money.

Statistics show that Americans spend \$38 billion [every year on self-storage units](#). No wonder why there are so many storage units "popping" up all over town. People are using these spaces as a permanent extension of their home. You are not off the hook if you don't rent a storage unit. Storing unused items in your home costs roughly \$10 per square foot. You can calculate your "clutter cost" by dividing your monthly rent or mortgage by the square footage of your home. That's how much you're paying for your space per square foot.

Two items people say they never have enough of is time and money. Clutter costs you both! The average American [spends multiple days per year](#) searching for missing items. Another survey states that U.S. households collectively spend a whopping 2.7 billion dollars annually replacing lost items. Ironically, people save items to save money, but are spending money because they have too much stuff to find what they need. By [decluttering your home](#), you can save thousands of dollars each year, stop wasting time, and [even reduce anxiety](#).

Don't lose the good stuff because you are keeping all the stuff!

Decluttering can be very overwhelming. There are a lot of different techniques, but the most popular right now is [KonMari method by tidying expert Marie Kondo](#). This method breaks down your items into categories instead of rooms. Rather than decluttering a room you gather up the same types of items and put them into a single pile. This gives you a visual of exactly how much of an item you really have. Seeing that heaping pile helps you realize what you truly need and don't need.

Another declutter trick is to purchase organization items after you have decluttered. This helps you avoid purchasing the wrong size bin, tote, or basket. Or, the wrong item all together. You don't want your organizing containers to turn into more clutter in your home. Waiting until you have eliminated some of your items to make those purchases can help you make better decisions about what is needed.

Turn your clutter into cash. This is a great time of year to make this happen since one of the fastest and low-tech ways is a yard sale. After a one- or two-day event you should donate the rest and be done with it. If sitting in a lawn chair in the garage doesn't sound like your speed there are a lot of online market places to list and sale your items. Facebook Marketplace, ebay, TredUp, Poshmart to name a few. Be sure to do a quick search on the brand or item to help you determine a price point for your items, then mark it a little lower if you want a quick sell.

By decluttering, you'll prevent spending money on wasted space *and* save money on the replacement of lost or missing items. Not to mention the load off your mind from constantly trying to manage all the stuff in your space or worrying about how it looks and what to do about it. It takes time to sift

through your clutter and transition into a tidier lifestyle, but once you do it will make a big difference in your life.

Source: Adapted Better Homes and Gardens, February 2021

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